

School District Redistricting Commission

Dear Governing Board Members and Superintendent:

The School Redistricting Commission (SDRC) has been charged by statute to address Arizona's K-12 educational system by recommending new district unifications that could enhance the educational experience for children and families, Kindergarten through grade 12. Like you, we also seek to increase efficiencies and maximize resources to be used for supporting classroom needs.

The SDRC is confident we share the same ideals and goals. Our mandate requires collaboration and serious consideration of change, combined with a resolute commitment to help Arizona's children realize the best possible education. Please take note: We have made every attempt to collect data and details to help us make the best decisions possible for the affected districts. We acknowledge that there may be areas where numbers need to be revised. Your help in providing missing information will be appreciated. We welcome that exchange and have even constructed the data sheets with columns for you to provide additional or corrected information for your district or specific schools, such as the ADM for individual high schools.

With this letter, we are submitting to you a preliminary report on a proposed school district unification plan that affects your school district. As provided by law in Laws 2005, Chapter 191, please submit an official response from the school board on the preliminary plans to the SDRC no later than July 30, 2007. Along with the official response, we also encourage any comments from individual board members. You should also be aware the Arizona Legislature is considering SB 1164 which would serve to extend this date to September 1, 2007. We will let you know if that extension occurs.

By law, the Commission has reviewed all current common school districts that are not part of a unified school district and considered whether to combine these common school districts into a new unified district. It was also charged with combining common school districts with a union high school district to create unified districts that offer instruction to students in programs for preschool children with disabilities and kindergarten programs and grades one through 12. The Commission was created pursuant to Laws 2005, Chapter 191 (Attachment A). Commission membership includes school district governing board members, teachers, a school and community college administrator and business representatives.

Since its creation, the Commission has held widely-publicized public hearings and meetings throughout the state to hear the ideas and opinions of parents, teachers and administrators in those areas that possibly could be affected by a unification plan. In developing the unification plans, the Commission considered many factors, including but not limited to:

- Relevant academic and scientific research regarding school size and school district size.
- Aligning K-12 curriculum.
- Teacher salaries and schedules.
- Travel time of students.
- District geographic boundaries.
- Career ladders.
- Primary and secondary tax issues.

- Fiscal implications and legal issues.
- Potential for more effective use of facilities.
- Application of teacher experience indexes and existing salary schedules.

Key actionable items and other suggestions for this process are as follows:

- The governing board of all affected school districts shall review the preliminary report as offered here. (This might include meeting with other affected districts involved in your unification plan.)
- The SDRC is to receive comments from affected school board members and superintendents on this report no later than July 30, 2007. It should be noted that the feedback and comments should be attributable to the governing bodies. Comments from individual representatives are also welcome.
- These comments should be offered in writing and sent to the Arizona Department of Education, c/o Art Harding, 1535 W. Jefferson St., Bin 2, Phoenix, AZ 85007. All comments will be checked in at this location and prepared for review by the Commissioners.
- If you have questions during the process of your review of the proposed plan(s), please address them to: Elizabeth Tuttle, Arizona Department of Education at elizabeth.tuttle@azed.gov or (602) 364-2425.
- After your comments have been received, the Commissioners will review them and likely host additional public meetings in time for developing a final proposed school district unification plan by December 31, 2007, at which time the Governor will sign the report and file them with the Secretary of State.
- County school superintendents that have affected districts in their counties will call an election of all the qualified voters within the boundaries of the proposed unified school district at the next general election. This election will occur in November 2008.

On behalf of the School District Redistricting Commission, we thank you for your commitment to Arizona's school children and for your professional and thoughtful consideration of the plans before you. We know this unification process adds to the great responsibilities you carry as a governing board member and appreciate your efforts. We welcome your comments and teamwork.

Cordially,



Martin L. Shultz
Chairman, SDRC
VP of Government Affairs
Pinnacle West Capital Corporation

School District Redistricting Commission Members:

Ms. Vicki Anderson, retired teacher/school librarian

Mr. Jay Blanchard, ASU College of Education, former state legislator

Dr. Sandra Dowling, Maricopa County School Superintendent

Ms. Doris Goodale, President, Kingman Unified School District (Mohave Co.)

Mr. Art Harding, Arizona Department of Education

Mr. Jay Kaprosy, Senior Government Relations Advisor, Steptoe & Johnson, former Legislative Liaison for the Superintendent of Public Instruction

Ms. Rita Leyva, Chief Deputy, Yavapai County Education Service Agency

Mr. Dave Naugle, Corporate Public Affairs, Southwest Gas Corporation, governing board member, Sonoita Elementary School District #25

Mayor Thomas Schoaf, Mayor of Litchfield Park, business owner, former board member of Litchfield Elementary School District

Mr. Kent Scribner, Superintendent, Isaac School District

Mr. Martin L. Shultz, VP Government Affairs, Pinnacle West Capital Corporation, former teacher and administrator (Chairman of Commission)

Mr. Joseph Thomas, teacher, Mesa Unified School District

Attachments/enclosures

Attachment A - Senate Bill 1068

Attachment B – District plan and recommendations (includes a color map, plan, one data sheet per plan offered)

Attachment C – FAQs